TL 1304

International Federation for East Timor

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Be it noted that Ambassador Brotoningrat's understanding with regard to the International Federation for East Timor (IFET) and the Free East Timor Japan Coalition is incorrect in several points. Ambassador Brotoningrat's understanding that "the parent organizations have their headquarters in Europe" is not correct. While a number of the organizations affiliated in IFET are located in Europe, others are located in Australia, Japan, the U.S. and Canada. The fact that the Federation chose to locate its secretariat in Japan and the fact that its President (Mr. Ohtori Kurino) is a Japanese with extensive experience in other Asian countries should reassure the Ambassador and the Conference Secretariat that IFET is by no means an organization with a European bias, or an organization "based" in Europe. The Free East Timor Japan Coalition is a Japanese organization with no member organizations outside Japan.

Furthermore, Ambassador Brotoningrat writes that, "These organisations...are neither human rights nor developmental organisations." With regard to IFET, let Ambassador Brotoningrat be assured that, as stated in the organization's Statutes, one of the main objectives of IFET is "to endeavour to guarantee internationally recognized human rights for all involved in the decolonization process of the territory." In keeping with this objective, member organizations have done all in their power to collect and disseminate data on the human rights situation in the territory. The Free East Timor Japan Coalition has pursued similar goals and has, when deemed appropriate, issued alerts to both specialists and the general public regarding specific human rights cases in East Timor. I.F.E.T. in particular, has a strong emphasis on the right of self-determination, which as the Ambassador will be aware is a fundamental right enshrined in the International Covenant on Human Rights. As the Statutes state: "The guiding spirit of the Federation is belief in the universality of the principle of self-determination of peoples and conviction that this principle can be realized in East timor through mobilization of worldwide suport for a vigorous UN role."

The Ambassador is not totally incorrect as regards "developmental" work by the two organizations. Unfortuantely, almost all international NGOs have been denied access to East Timor, including those devoted to developmental work. The two organizations regard this as regrettable.

Also regretable is the negative characterization of the two groups as "political

pressure groups against the integration of East Timor into Indonesia." Neither group, in its activities or basic purpose, is a priori opposed to the integration of East Timor into Indonesia, should integration be the choice of the people of East Timor. The thrust of both groups is toward creating the conditions for an act of free choice on the part of the people of East Timor, recognizing the fact that the constructive engagement of the international community is vital to realizing this.

Please note that while IFET does not have consultative status with ECOSOC, it is affiliated with the United Nations Department of Information. Indeed, it is felt that to fulfill the expectations which the United Nations Department of Information has of affiliated organizations, it is essential for IFET to participate in fora such as the World Conference on Human Rights and the Asian regional preconference.

(This is Indonesian Ambassador's objection to IFET's and FETJC's participation in the Asian Regional Meeting. Evidently the Human Rights Centre drew up its own list of regional NGOs (not necessarily all NGOs which applied), and this was the list shown to the Governments.)

1. I wish to recall once again that on the question of participation of the NGOs at regional meetings, it was agreed during the Third Prepcom that, apart from the NGOs with consultative status with ECOSOC, "NGOs which are active in the field of human rights and/or development, and have their headquarters in the region, in prior consultation with the countries of the region", could participate as observers in the Regional Meeting.

2. The two NGOs included in the above-mentioned lists, namely "Free East Timor Japan Coalition" and "International Federation for East Timor (IFET)", are part of an international network engaged in political activities relating to East Timor. The parent-organisations have their headquarters in Europe and do not have a consultative status with ECOSOC. These organisations which are neither human rights nor developmental organisations, consequently, do not meet the criteria of NGOs to participate in the Regional Meeting for Asia as referred in point 1, since they are mainly acting as political pressure groups against the integration of East Timor into Indonesia.

For the above-mentioned reasons, I would like to submit the following position of my government:

1. We have strong objections to the participation of the two Japanese NGOs, namely "Free East Timor Japan Coalition" and "International Federation for East Timor (IFET)".

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